

Public Hearing – January 27, 2021
Transportation Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Katie S. Dykes

Senate Bill [261](#) AN ACT CONCERNING RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Senate Bill No. 261 - AN ACT CONCERNING RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES.

The purpose of this bill is to implement recommendations of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), and included within this bill are proposed revisions to statutes that impact the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). DEEP supports all sections related to its programs. More specifically, section 5 proposes revisions in section 14-21z of the general statutes related to the issuance of the Save our Lakes commemorative number plates and directs how the fees for such plates are to be utilized. Section 6 clarifies the term “Commissioner” in section 14-21aa of the general statutes. Section 32 proposes revisions to section 15-144 of the general statutes related to the assignment and issuance of registrations by marine dealers upon the sale or transfer of vessels. Finally, sections 33 and 34 propose revisions to sections 14-96q and 14-283 of the general statutes concerning permits for colored and flashing lights on motor vehicles or equipment, and emergency vehicles, respectively.

Section 34 of the bill is highly important for DEEP. This section removes any ambiguity concerning whether certain DEEP vehicles fall within the definition of “emergency vehicle.” Section 14-283 of the general statutes would be amended to clarify that DEEP vehicles operated by DEEP personnel when responding to or during a fire or emergency call would fall under the definition of “emergency vehicle.” This pertains to a small universe of personnel within DEEP, namely those who respond to environmental, radiation, nuclear power plant (as part of the state’s approved radiological emergency plan for Millstone as set forth in federal regulations), or public safety emergencies, and also those who address wildfire suppression or control. These DEEP employees are designated to respond to emergency incidents and address fires in accordance with their job duties, they are trained by the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection to operate emergency vehicles and the requisite equipment such as sirens and flashing lights, and they must timely respond to emergency incidents and safely maneuver and park their vehicles at the scene of the emergency or fire. In addition, having DEEP emergency responders on site as quickly as possible provides valuable support to federal, state and local emergency responders during emergency incidents given the potential public health and safety hazards associated with exposure to certain environmental and radiological releases.

Insofar as revisions are proposed in section 34 of the bill concerning section 14-283(h) of the general statutes, please note that the term “authorized emergency vehicle” is defined in section 14-1(5) of the general statutes. The General Assembly may wish to substitute “emergency vehicle” for “authorized emergency vehicle.” In the alternative, the General Assembly may wish to amend

the definition of “authorized emergency vehicle” in section 14-1(5) of the general statutes to simply provide that it is “a vehicle specified in subsection (a) of section 14-283 of the general statutes.”

DEEP supports the revisions proposed in section 33 to update section 14-96q of the general statutes to take into account revisions made during the 2019 legislative session and also to account for updates to section 14-283(a) of the general statutes as presently proposed.

We ask the committee to consider moving the July 1st effective date to effective upon passage for sections 33 and 34.

Section 5 sets a fee for the Save the Lakes commemorative number plates, and provides for how much of that fee is dedicated toward DMV’s cost of producing, issuing, renewing and replacing such plates and how much of that fee is dedicated toward the Connecticut Lakes, Rivers and Ponds Preservation account. Section 6 clarifies that the term “Commissioner” in section 14-21aa of the general statutes is meant to be the Commissioner of DEEP, not the DMV Commissioner, and that the DEEP Commissioner may receive private donations to the Connecticut Lakes, Rivers and Ponds Preservation account and may provide for the reproduction and marketing of the Save our Lakes commemorative plate image for use on a variety of merchandise, including clothing, recreational equipment, posters, and more.

Marine dealers are already issuing temporary registrations upon the sale or transfer of vessels. The revisions proposed in section 32 of the bill related to section 15-144 (e) of the general statutes would allow for marine dealers to issue permanent registrations, making for a more efficient and streamlined process for the boating public, obviating the need for them to visit a DMV office to register their vessels.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact James Albis at James.Albis@ct.gov.